



CATHERINE E. PUGH
MAYOR

*100 Holliday Street, Room 250
Baltimore, Maryland 21202*

March 5, 2019

The Honorable Robert Stokes
Chairman
Executive Appointments Committee
Baltimore City Council

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members,

Baltimore and its Police Department are presented with a unique and decisive opportunity to turn the tide and embark on a new era of credibility, community collaboration, confidence and trust. When I submitted for your consideration on February 11 of this year my nomination of Michael S. Harrison as Baltimore's next Police Commissioner, I did so with the firm belief that he was the right person, at the right time, and in the right place to lead our Police Department forward and begin this new era that all our residents have long hoped for and deserve.

Throughout his more than 27 years as a police officer with the New Orleans Police Department, Michael Harrison distinguished himself for an uncompromised commitment to integrity, transparency and proactive outreach and accountability to the community he was sworn to protect and serve. Acting Commissioner Harrison's commitment to 21st Century, community-based policing is best reflected by his view that the awesome responsibility of law enforcement officers to police others is ultimately granted not by laws but by the very people they police. It is his understanding of this delicate balance between residents and officers that uniquely qualifies Michael Harrison for the responsibility I have asked him to assume in this City and at this time of considerable challenge. He understands - and has demonstrated throughout his career - that law enforcement is but one among many components in a multi-disciplinary approach to reducing crime and violence that likewise requires addressing their root causes - economic disparity, lack of education and job opportunity, broken homes, neglected neighborhoods. Hopelessness. It is his commitment to this approach which he has already begun to advocate among the rank and file as Acting Commissioner that confirms to me the potential he represents to bring about true healing and sustainable change.

Michael Harrison successfully led the implementation of a Federal Consent Decree in his native city. He did so knowing that it was the best hope for internal culture transformation and reform within his department, as well as a blueprint for re-establishing trust between officers and the community. He is equally committed to fully implementing the Consent Decree that we have made non-negotiable in our Administration's priorities. Moreover, Michael Harrison understands the need to exploit the benefits that technology offers our police officers to be more efficient, more effective and, indeed, more accountable, ensuring that they have the tools and resources they need to bring about peace in our streets and most importantly, peace in the minds and hearts of our City residents.

Michael Harrison - in his nine community meetings across our City, and in his many other engagements with community, business and faith leaders - has demonstrated his capacity to listen. He is a man of uncommon empathy, keen insight and seasoned wisdom that can only be gained from years of honest attempt, lessons learned and unwavering resolve to make a positive difference. Michael Harrison's nearly three-decade career has been solely one of public service. We believe that Michael Harrison has the capacity and capability to overhaul, reform and build a police departments that all of Baltimore can be proud of.

I encourage this Committee and this Council to embrace Michael Harrison's candidacy as Baltimore Police Commissioner and to pledge your full support for his determination to bring about the transformation that we know is possible, but which will ultimately depend on the relentless and collaborative effort of us all.

Respectfully,



Catherine E. Pugh

Mayor Catherine E. Pugh